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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Our Father in Heaven, how great You are. Today, lead our lawmakers in their work. May they be messengers of unity and hope.

Lord, make them productive servants who strive to honor You. Remind them to act with justice, love, mercy, and humility. May they speak words that bring life as they seek to live with integrity.

Sovereign Lord, strengthen our Senators to seize opportunities that bring peace, hope, and freedom.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, the Senate has continued to make headway in the personnel business. This week, we are confirming a number of President Trump's thoroughly qualified nominees to important vacancies in the Federal courts and in the administration.

As I have said, it is unfortunate for this institution that our Democratic

colleagues have made it their routine practice to require not just rollcall votes but cloture votes as well on non-controversial nominees for lower profile positions—regular cloture votes on district judges, cloture votes on Assistant Secretaries, and, later this week, a cloture vote on an Assistant EPA Administrator.

These are the sorts of important but lower profile positions the Senate used to quickly process on a voice vote. When these sorts of people were qualified, they were voice-voted by Senates of both parties for Presidents of both parties. That was the norm.

New partisan hurdles will not deter the Senate from doing our job. We will continue to spend the time it takes to put impressive, impartial men and women on the Federal judiciary and give the President—more than 2 years into his administration—finally, more of his team in place in the executive branch.

Yesterday afternoon, we voted to advance the nomination of Daniel Bress to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Mr. Bress comes with strong credentials, the academic pedigree, the legal experience, and, most importantly, a demonstrated commitment to the rule of law.

I am glad we voted to advance his nomination yesterday, and I urge our colleagues to confirm him later today.

Next, we will consider three district court nominees: T. Kent Wetherell to the Northern District of Florida, Damon Leichty to the Northern District of Indiana, and Nicholas Ranjan to the Western District of Pennsylvania.

After them, we will confirm several nominees to serve in the administration: Robert King to be Assistant Secretary of Education, John Pallasch to be Assistant Secretary of Labor, and Peter Wright to be Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

In each of these cases, the President has presented us with thoroughly well-

qualified individuals to serve the Nation in these very important roles. This week, the Senate will give them the straightforward consideration and confirmations they deserve.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, on another matter, Fourth of July celebrations weren't the only thing for American families to smile about last week. We received even more positive news about the strong U.S. economy that American workers and job creators are building with a big assist from Republican policies.

More than 200,000 new jobs were created in June alone. The economy is overflowing with opportunities. American workers are in high demand and more and more previously sidelined individuals are getting to clock back in.

The last administration's so-called recovery disproportionately helped a few major metropolitan areas, but it left whole communities and whole regions of our country more or less in the dust. Not these days. The results have been very different under Republicans' pro-growth, pro-opportunity policy agenda. Now we are seeing a real all-American recovery.

As the New York Times reported last week, "Only recently have the economic gains filtered down to Black and Hispanic workers, those with less education, and others who face discrimination or other barriers to employment."

So it is all kinds of American workers, all kinds of families, all kinds of small towns and farm counties and smaller cities and suburbs. This all-American recovery is benefiting our whole country with job opportunities, wage growth, net investment, and new optimism.

Two and a half years ago, Republicans started out with a pretty simple philosophy. It goes like this: The American people can accomplish great things and build prosperity for their

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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